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Application of an intergovernmental organization for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

Letter dated 21 November 2001 from the Secretary-General of the Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-alga Spirulina against malnutrition addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council*

The secretariat of the Intergovernmental Institution for the Use of Micro-alga Spirulina against Malnutrition (Spirulina Programme), an intergovernmental organization, that is the depository for the Free Agreement for Cooperation in Scientific Research and Humanitarian Use of Micro-Alga Spirulina as Food and of the Convention for the Use of Food Micro-alga and Inter-University Scientific Research, has the honour to transmit to the President of the Economic and Social Council this application for accreditation as an observer to the Council. The application is prompted by the desire to support the goals of the Council and the United Nations.

In the area of the use of food microalgae, the agreements follow on from:

- The declarations made at the 1974 United Nations World Food Conference, which identified microalga Spirulina as an outstanding foodstuff for the future;
- The action taken by the Governments of China and India to promote awareness of the relevance of food microalgae;
- The reports of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Health Organization (in addition to those of the United States Food and Drug Administration and the European Union) identifying food microalgae as extremely useful.

* The annexes referred to are deposited with the Economic and Social Council secretariat and can be examined by member States upon request.

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The Agreement and the Convention are multilateral and have been registered with the Secretary-General of the United Nations (under Article 102 of the Charter) (Nos. 37542 and 37543); they have been signed by many countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe. They focus on the application of new agricultural technologies (particularly in connection with the use of high-protein, vitamin-rich food microalgae) to combat hunger in developing countries.

The Agreement sets up the Intergovernmental Spirulina Programme, the International Centre for Food Micro-algae against Malnutrition (ICFAM) and the Intergovernmental University Institute of Cooperation (IUIC).

Accreditation as observers to the Council, under rule 79 of its Rules of Procedure, is being requested on behalf of the Intergovernmental Spirulina Programme, ICFAM and IUIC (possibly).

The necessary legal instruments, the full texts of the two agreements (the Agreement and the Convention) and the Contracting Parties' instruments of accession, as well as the corresponding scientific and technical documents, are annexed to this application for accreditation.

The institution of a formal relationship with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), for the purpose of ensuring technological and scientific support, is being requested at the same time.

Accreditation to the Council would unquestionably play a major role in guaranteeing successful completion of the project to combat malnutrition and strengthen inter-university research. It should be noted, moreover, that the FAO unit for the Democratic Republic of the Congo indicates in one of its bulletins (TCP/RDC/6712, November 1999, on setting up a food security and nutrition information system) that it views Spirulina as a foodstuff of great importance and is therefore calling on both international and national organizations to become parties to the Convention.

Annex

The relevance of the organizations concerned to the Council's goals and their financing

(I) The organizations deal with issues of great relevance to the Council's work, such as the eradication of hunger and malnutrition, and promotion of inter-university research among developing countries. They support the goals and the work of the United Nations and its agencies, such as FAO, IFAD and WFP.

(II) The organizations depend on the following different types of income:

(1) Voluntary contributions from member States (the agreements do not stipulate obligatory contributions from member States);

(2) Contributions from public sources (international financial institutions, donor countries, universities and research bodies);

(3) Private donations.

The organizations depend at present on the second and third types of income mentioned above, because member States are in serious economic difficulties owing to their high levels of external debt.

Moreover, these are new organizations, either from a formal viewpoint (they were officially registered with the Secretary-General of the United Nations only in June 2001), or from an operational viewpoint (they have nimble, energetic secretariats, highly qualified staff, and an extensive research network of professionals and special consultants, and they make use of the new Internet technologies).

To achieve their organizations and operational goals, they must be able to rely on dynamic, effective funding. They currently have at their disposal a structural fund of approximately $400,000.

Preventive funds for 2002 amount to $2 million, and the organizations are conducting an ambitious campaign to promote awareness and raise funds, targeting both the public and the private sector.

This is a promising scenario, and the organizations believe they have every reason to be optimistic as they apply to the Council for observer status; all the more so, since the issues involved are so important.

(*Signed*) A. **Manini**
Secretary-General